

# Falls Church Kiwanis Little League

## Parent and Player Handbook

### 2014

[www.FCKLL.org](http://www.FCKLL.org)

#### **About Little League**

Little League Baseball, Incorporated is a non-profit organization whose mission is to "to promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways, the interest of those who will participate in Little League Baseball and Softball."

Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists youth in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork, and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage, and loyalty, the Little League Baseball and Softball program seeks to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.

Little League was founded in 1939, and granted a Federal Charter on July 16, 1964, by unanimous act of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Public Law 88-378, 88th Congress H.R. 9234, and amended December 26, 1974, Public Law 93-551, 93rd Congress, H.R. 8864. Little League is a tax-exempt organization.

#### **Little League Pledge**

*I trust in God  
I love my country  
And will respect its laws  
I will play fair  
And strive to win  
But win or lose  
I will always  
Do my best*

#### **The Little League Parent/Volunteer Pledge**

*I will teach all children to play fair and do their best  
I will positively support all managers, coaches and players  
I will respect the decision of the umpires  
I will praise a good effort despite the outcome of the game*

[www.littleleague.org](http://www.littleleague.org)

## FCKLL Board of Directors

Falls Church Kiwanis Little League (FCKLL) is a non-profit corporation registered with the Commonwealth of Virginia and chartered by Little League Baseball, Inc. FCKLL is administered by a Board of Directors and operated by volunteers. The Board is elected at the Annual Meeting of the corporation held each year on the second Monday in September. Everyone associated with the League is urged to attend this meeting. In addition, the Board of Directors meets at least once a month, typically on the first Tuesday of the month. Any parent/guardian of a child participating in the League is encouraged to attend.

President .....	Brian Fiegel
V.P. Administration .....	David Lang
V.P. Operations & Maintenance.....	Brandon Milhorn
Secretary.....	Neal Comstock
Secretary-designate.....	Jim Alverson
Treasurer.....	Doug Carpenter
Player Agent.....	Charles Hansen
V.P. Majors .....	Wade Little
AAA Coordinator .....	Jim Villa
AA Coordinator.....	Eric Peña
A Coordinator .....	Derek Toman
T-Ball Coordinator.....	Sebastian Pawlowski
.....	Ray Wu-Rorrer
Fall Ball Coordinator.....	Jim Villa
Training .....	Brent Sharrer
Quartermaster.....	Tim Bradley
Fields Task Force.....	Jay Smith
Challenger Program.....	Joe Miller
All Star and Bullpen Coordinator .....	Matt Fletchall
Sponsorship .....	Jeff Weaver
Fundraising .....	Todd Sedmak
Safety Officer .....	Mike Deeley
Snack Bar Coordinator.....	Tom Coates
Information Officer .....	Bob Farrace
Chairman, Manager Selection Cmte..	Wade Little
Chief Umpire .....	Kyle Gilster
Volunteer Coordinator.....	Justine Fitzgerald
Publicity Coordinator.....	Jim Way

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This handbook provides a basic understanding of the FCKLL program. The content is intended as a general overview, and is not a substitute for FCKLL's official policies and procedures.

## **General Information**

### **League Goals**

FCKLL provides an opportunity for children to learn lifetime skills, including leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Parents and guardians play a vital role in their children's experiences and are instrumental in making those experiences positive. FCKLL encourages parents and guardians to be involved and to help their children develop these new skills.

League administrators, managers, coaches, officials, and parents must work cooperatively to provide a safe and positive environment. When adults put the best interests of children first, the players are likely to have constructive and enjoyable experiences. It is FCKLL's goal that each child:

- acquire an appreciation for an active lifestyle
- develop a positive self-concept by mastering baseball skills
- learn how to work as part of a team
- develop social skills with other children and adults
- learn about managing success and disappointment
- learn good sportsmanship
- learn respect for others

### **League Operation and Volunteers**

Organizing and operating a sports program is a big undertaking. Your willingness to invest time and effort will benefit your child and is essential to the successful operation of FCKLL. The success of FCKLL is directly attributable to the commitment of the people in the community.

FCKLL is completely administered and managed by volunteers. It is crucial that each player's parents or guardians help FCKLL in some way. With your help, FCKLL can continue to ensure that the League is a safe, fun environment where children can learn to play baseball, improve their athletic skills, and most importantly, build and mold a positive character. FCKLL is only as strong as its volunteers. Some volunteer activities are very visible, while others occur behind the scenes. Some activities involve significant time commitments, while others require only a few hours. Some activities require specific knowledge and skills, while others require nothing but a willingness to help. Regardless of the activity, all volunteers make FCKLL work. Many jobs must be performed for a Little League to operate, and the philosophy of Little League International is that volunteers, not professionals, manage leagues. It is vital that everyone recognizes the value of volunteering. Volunteers enable FCKLL to operate successfully and efficiently.

Please review the following list of officially recognized volunteer commitments, and consider volunteering for one of these activities. Performing any of these activities will benefit FCKLL – and volunteers find that they enjoy contributing to the benefit of our youth.

## **FCKLL Volunteer Activities**

- Adult Umpire—Umpire training begins in the early spring (2 games required).
- All Star/Tournament Announcers—As a host league, FCKLL provides each tournament game with an announcer who announces the players, coaches, and umpires at the beginning of the game, and announces each batter and any substitutions. Tournament games are mid-June through mid-July (2 games required).
- All Star/Tournament Scorekeepers—As a host league, FCKLL provides a scorekeeper who keeps accurate statistics during each tournament game. Tournament games are mid-June through mid-July (2 games required).
- Board of Directors—The Directors are elected at the Annual Meeting. The Board is responsible for the operation of FCKLL. The Board has many positions with varying areas of responsibility.
- Coach of Record—Each team has one coach of record. While the team may have other assistant coaches, a Coach of Record is a “full-time” coach who works closely with the Manager and helps to run practices and develop the players’ skills.
- Fall Work Day—Help prepare fields for the winter. Duties may include weeding, bull pen/batting cage maintenance, cleaning the snack bar, painting, etc. The Fall Work Day typically occurs the first weekend in November. (4 hour shift).
- Family Fun Fair & Awards Day Committee—Help organize and prepare for FCKLL’s annual Family Fun Fair and Awards Day. Tasks include ordering amusements, coordinating volunteers, and overseeing set-up and clean-up.
- Fundraising Committee—Responsible for preparing the forms for the Hit-A-Thon, presenting at the Team Parent/Fundraising Parent meeting, collecting the funds from the fundraising parents, overseeing the Hit-A-Thon, field preparation, and ordering and distributing the Hit-A-Thon prizes.
- Fundraising Parent—Each team has a Fundraising Parent who handles the Hit-A-Thon paperwork for their players, promotes the event to the team, and distributes prizes earned by the team’s players. The fundraising parent is expected to attend one meeting, attend their team’s hitting session on the day of the Hit-A-Thon, and collect and turn in the funds raised by the team.
- Hit-A-Thon Committee—This group prepares the fields for the Hit-A-Thon, sets out the necessary equipment out on each field, and dismantles and stores the equipment after the Hit-A-Thon.
- Manager—Individual responsible for handling all aspects of team management, including instructing players in the proper techniques of baseball during practice, game management, soliciting volunteers to assist in running the team, demonstrating proper sportsmanship, and ensuring that the players are safe at all times. The Manager must represent the attitude and philosophy of the League.
- Manager Selection Committee—Recruits and interviews prospective Managers to find those with the best approach to coaching, team building and sportsmanship.
- Memorial Day Parade Committee—Players and their families alike participate in the Falls Church City Memorial Day Parade. This Committee helps plan and prepare the float, coordinates the sound system, submits FCKLL’s parade registration, and organizes the participants at the Parade.

- Opening Day Committee—Organizes Opening Day festivities. Tasks include coordinating parking, inviting honored guests (local dignitaries, clergy, and a speaker), organizing the teams on the morning of the parade, and field preparation and set-up.
- Publicity—Publicists at each level (Majors, AAA, AA, A, Sluggers, T-ball Rookies) provide a recap of each week's games for publication on the Internet and in local news outlets. They work closely with the Director of Publicity.
- Registration Committee—Distribute flyers to local schools, staff registration events, and help the Player Agent as needed.
- Scheduler—Develops and maintains the practice and game schedule for the League.
- Scholar-Athlete Program—In order to promote the importance of academics, FCKLL awards a Scholar-Athlete Award to players who maintain a B average or better. The individual in charge of this program distributes the flyer and forms, collects all returned forms, and creates the award certificate.
- Skills Assessment Committee—This group prepares for the skills assessment, checks the players into the assessment, prepares the players, and provides other support as required.
- Snack Bar—Help feed the hungry crowds. Staffing the snack bar includes managing the food and drink inventory, preparing hot foods, and cleaning as necessary (2 game shift).
- Sponsorship Committee—This group solicits donations from local businesses, orders banners, coordinates with the Quartermaster, and ensures that teams keep in contact with their sponsors.
- Spring Work Day—Help prepare fields for the spring season. Duties may include weeding, bullpen/batting cage maintenance, cleaning the snack bar, painting, etc. The Spring Work Day typically occurs in late March (4 hour shift).
- Team Parent—Each team has a Team Parent who assists the Manager by coordinating the team's participation in league events, coordinating snack assignments, planning the team party, and other tasks as needed.
- Team Scorekeeper—Responsible for keeping accurate game statistics in a team scorebook. Scorekeeping includes entering the lineups and recording every pitch and play, while following standard baseball scorekeeping procedures (these are easy to learn; FCKLL provides a training clinic each spring).
- Team Sponsorship—Team sponsors help pay for equipment and uniforms, field maintenance, training, and umpiring costs. Each team's sponsor has its name placed on the back of the team's uniforms. Spring, fall, and All-Star sponsorships are available.
- Training Committee—This group plans, organizes, and implements the players' and managers'/coaches' training programs.
- Trophy Coordinator—Arranges trophies for the League and medallions for graduating 12-year-old players.
- Umpire Coordinator—Schedules umpire crews for all regular season and playoff games each week during the spring and fall seasons. Works closely with the Chief Umpire and the Scheduler.
- Web Administration—Help maintain, update and create a friendly, informative web site for FCKLL.

## **Protecting Our Children**

To maintain a safe environment for our youth, FCKLL volunteer positions require a completed volunteer application that consents to a background check. Background checks are required and conducted on Managers, Coaches, Board of Directors members, and any other persons, volunteers or hired workers who provide regular service to FCKLL and/or have repetitive access to, or contact with, players or teams. These procedures protect our children and FCKLL from those who would seek to harm children, protect individuals and FCKLL from possible loss of assets because of litigation, and take advantage of technology and laws that make background check information accessible.

## **Registration**

### **Eligible Players**

All boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 12 who reside within FCKLL's boundaries or are otherwise eligible to register for FCKLL are invited to participate. A child's *League Age* is the age of a child on April 30 of that year. A birth certificate (or other authorized proof of age document) must be provided for every player. Additionally, parents/guardians must provide proof of residency that establishes that a player resides within FCKLL's boundaries or is otherwise eligible.

### **Acceptable Forms of Documentation**

Residence will be established and supported by three of the following documents:

- Driver's License
- Utility bills (i.e., gas, electric, water/sewer, phone, mobile phone, heating)
- Voter Registration
- School records
- Financial records (loan, credit, investments, etc.)
- Welfare/child care records
- Federal records
- State records
- Insurance documents
- Local (municipal) records
- Medical records
- Military records
- Homeowner or tenant records
- Internet, cable or satellite records
- Vehicle records
- Employment records

The player's League Age will be certified by one of the following documents:

- Proof-of-age document issued by a federal or state registrar of vital statistics (e.g., birth certificate) [THIS IS THE PREFERRED METHOD].
- Document issued by a federal or state registrar of vital statistics listing the date of birth with reference to the location and issue date of the original birth certificate.

- Report of Birth Form GS240 for children born abroad of parents who are United States citizens.
- DD Form 1173 identification cards and military hospital certificates for military dependents.
- Passport or state identification card.

### **Registration Process**

Registration for the spring season typically begins in December and runs through January. While this is a few months before the season begins, it allows the League to plan the number of teams, managers, and equipment required for the upcoming season. Although we encourage every family to register online at FCKLL.org, you may also register by mail by downloading a form from FCKLL.org and mailing it to: FCKLL, P.O. Box 6612, Falls Church, VA, 22040.

NOTE: Families that register online or by mail still will be required to submit original documentation when requested by FCKLL (for example, at their child's skills assessment).

Fees must accompany the registration form. Checks should be made payable to Falls Church Kiwanis Little League. To make baseball affordable for all families, FCKLL offers the following discounts:

- Sibling Discount: Families that register more than one player may deduct \$25 from the fee for their second and subsequent children.
- Early Bird Discount: A discount is available for each registration submitted by the early bird deadline listed on the registration form, on the website, and in e-mails from FCKLL

### **Financial Assistance**

All children who meet FCKLL age and residency requirements are eligible to play Little League Baseball and to participate in FCKLL training opportunities, regardless of the family's ability to pay the fees. Families who wish to request financial assistance are encouraged to contact FCKLL's President or Player Agent. All requests for financial assistance will be handled confidentially.

### **League Structure**

FCKLL is divided into six levels of play to ensure that children participate at a level commensurate with their age, maturity, and ability. FCKLL offers T-ball Rookies, T-ball Sluggers, A, AA, AAA, and Majors. With the exception of Majors, all teams are disbanded at the end of each season and new teams are formed the following year. Children who are league age 8 or older must participate in a skills assessment/tryout session that allows the Player Agent and Managers to place each child into the level where they will be most successful. The following is a brief description of the various levels:



### **T-ball Rookies**

**Age Range:** League Age 4 and 5 year olds; any new 6 year olds.

**Team Formation:** Teams are formed primarily according to common neighborhoods and schools among the players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible.

**Description:** Players learn, develop, and practice fundamental baseball skills in a nurturing environment. The batter hits the ball from a batting tee, developing hand-eye coordination and the swing technique without fear of being hit by a pitched ball. Defensive players are encouraged to register outs, though base runners are not removed from the bases. Participation trophies are awarded to all players.

### **Sluggers**

**Age Range:** Mostly League Age 6 year olds; new 7 year olds.

**Team Formation:** Teams are formed primarily by common neighborhoods and schools among players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible.

**Description:** This level is geared to older/returning players who are ready for more of a challenge. Batters hit pitches thrown by their coach. If a batter does not make contact with a pitched ball, the at-bat is completed from a batting tee. There are no strikeouts, but outs are recorded on defensive plays, so an emphasis is placed on developing field and throwing skills. Participation trophies are awarded to all players.

### **Single A (A)**

**Age Range:** Mostly League Age 7 year olds with many League Age 8 year olds.

**Team Formation:** Teams are formed primarily by common neighborhoods and schools among the players. Requests to play with specific coaches or players are accommodated if possible. In order to balance the competitiveness of teams, the age and experience level of players will be considered in assigning players to teams.

**Description:** Single A Ball is focused on player development, but competition is introduced as a part of the game at this level. Teams keep score and win/loss records are kept. Outs can be made on batters and base runners, and batters can strike out. The strong developmental aspect of the level dictates a few unique rules and practices. Coaches pitch to the batters. Defensive coaches are positioned on the field during play. Teams use a continuous batting order. Playing time is divided evenly; the opportunity to play a variety of positions is afforded each child. Trophies are awarded to regular season and tournament champions; participation trophies are awarded to all players.

### **Double A (AA)**

**Age Range:** Mostly League Age 8 and 9 year olds with a very few advanced 7 year olds, as well as 10 year olds who are determined to not be ready for AAA.

**Team Formation:** All players of League Age 8 and older must participate in a skills assessment/tryout. Only players achieving a minimum score will be eligible for AA. Teams are formed by a player draft. Not all players eligible for AA will be selected in the draft to play at the AA level. If AA teams need to replace players during the season, AA-eligible players will be selected from A level teams.

**Description:** At AA, the focus on player development is balanced with increased team competitiveness. This is the level where players first pitch in games and are allowed to steal

bases. A continuous batting order is used, playing time is distributed evenly, and each player will play infield positions in every game. While all players should be encouraged and taught to play all positions, for reasons of competitiveness, Managers may assign increased playing time at key positions based on player performance. Trophies are awarded to regular season and tournament champions, and participation trophies are awarded to all players.

### **Triple A (AAA)**

**Age Range:** Mostly League Age 9, 10 and 11 year olds, with a very few advanced 8 year olds and a very few league age 12 year olds who are determined to not be ready for the Majors level.

**Team Formation:** All players of League Age 8 and older must participate in a skills assessment/tryout. Only players achieving a minimum score will be eligible for AAA. Teams are formed each year by a player draft. Not all players eligible for AAA will be selected in the draft to play at the AAA level. If AAA teams need to replace players during the season, AAA-eligible players will be selected from AA level teams.

**Description:** While Little League Baseball always focuses on player development, AAA is a more competitive level. Some special rules still apply to help Managers even out playing time and position assignments. Specifically, teams use a continuous batting order, and no player may sit out for consecutive innings. AAA players begin to develop advanced baseball skills, and position specialization begins to take place. Trophies are awarded only to regular season and tournament champions.

### **Majors**

**Age Range:** Mostly League Age 11 and 12 year olds, with a very few advanced 10 year olds.

**Team Formation:** Players not currently on a Majors team will participate in a skills assessment/tryout, and teams will be formed by a player draft. Once a player is assigned to a Majors team, that will be his/her team for future seasons through the remainder of their Little League eligibility. However, fluctuations in the size of FCKLL and other factors occasionally may result in expansion drafts or player trades that result in players being moved to another team. These situations are the exception, and care is taken to consider the interests of the individual players as well as the needs of FCKLL.

**Description:** While Little League baseball always focuses on player development, the Majors level is the most competitive level. The Majors level follows official Little League rules and regulations, with no special rules such as the continuous batting order used at the lower levels. Following standard baseball rules regarding substitutions, etc., means game strategy and substitutions will be different than players and parents experienced at the lower levels. Trophies are awarded only to regular season and tournament champions.

### **Challenger**

**Age Range:** League Age 5 to 22 year olds with physical or mental disabilities and special needs.

**Description:** The Challenger program allows those children with special needs to participate in a baseball program with the assistance of Majors teams. This enriching experience gives these players the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of Little League baseball in a suitable environment.

## **Training**

FCKLL provides and recommends a variety of clinics and training for players, umpires, managers, and coaches. Managers and coaches are able to learn age- and level-specific drills to teach baseball skills. Umpires learn the rules for each level, and practice in game-like situations. Players have the opportunity to improve their skills through a variety of classes. FCKLL offers a T-Ball clinic prior to the spring season, and private training facilities such as Virginia Baseball Club (VBC) in Merrifield – a close FCKLL partner and sponsor – offer several classes for players ages 8 through 12. While some sessions begin as early as November, most training sessions are provided at the beginning of the year (January/February/March) prior to the start of the spring season. Players may register for training classes online at FCKLL.org, by printing and submitting the form from FCKLL.org, or at registration.

## **Skills Assessment/Tryouts**

FCKLL conducts skills assessments/tryouts to determine the skill level of players. Except for those children already playing on a Majors team, children who are League Ages 8 to 12 must participate in a skills assessment to be eligible to play on a Majors, AAA, or AA team. Some League Age 8-year-old players who participate in a skills assessment may be placed on a A-level team. Any League Age 7-year olds who wish to be considered for selection to a AA team must be invited to participate in the skills assessment, after first requesting and then participating in a preliminary skills assessment with the Player Agent. At the skills assessments/tryouts, Managers and coaches rate each player's ability to hit, throw, run, field fly balls, and field ground balls. Managers also may ask a child to pitch (pitching is not included in the total score). A player's score is kept confidential.

The skills assessment/tryout is approximately 20 minutes in length. Only players are allowed in the gym; parents (except for Managers and coaches) wait outside the gym.

**What to Bring:** Each player should arrive at the skills assessment equipped to play. Children should wear gym shoes (no cleats) and comfortable clothing, as they will run in the gym. Each player should bring his/her glove. Bats and helmets are provided, but each player may choose to bring one bat and helmet.

When the skills assessment/tryouts are over, the FCKLL Player Agent creates a list of players eligible for draft selection at each level by tabulating the scores each child receives for hitting, fielding, running, and throwing.

## **The Draft**

FCKLL works within a draft system that follows established Little League policies and guidelines. FCKLL approaches its draft with the following principles in mind:

- All FCKLL parents and volunteers want what is in each child's best interest.
- Each child wants to have fun playing baseball.
- Parents want their children to have a positive experience.
- FCKLL selects teams to allow each child a fair opportunity to participate and contribute.

The skills assessment/tryout and draft is a Little League-approved method for achieving these goals. Although FCKLL is sensitive to parents' wishes regarding the level into which their child is drafted, it is Little League's policy that a child will play at the level at which he/she is drafted. This rule means that by registering to play baseball, a child (and his/her parents) agree to play at whatever level the Managers determine is best, based on the child's ability. Parents who seek an exemption to the Managers' determination may discuss the situation with the FCKLL Player Agent. A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Player Agent and describe the reasons for the exemption. Exemptions may be granted to enable siblings to play together on the same team.

FCKLL's responsibility is to ensure that each player plays at an appropriate level. The draft is the method that FCKLL uses to accomplish the following objectives successfully:

- Distribute talent into the appropriate level of play (i.e., Majors, AAA, AA), thereby promoting the strength and growth of FCKLL.
- Distribute talent evenly throughout each level, thereby making the games more competitive and fun.
- Promote the safety of the players. (If a player plays above his/her skill level, he/she could be more likely to get hurt. If a player plays below his/her skill level, he/she could be more likely to inadvertently hurt others).

The list of Major-eligible players (i.e., players who earn the minimum required rating indicating that they have the skills necessary to play in Majors) is presented to the Board of Directors. Once the Board approves the list, only players on the list are eligible to be drafted into Majors. Typically, there are more players on the Major-eligible list than there are available positions on Major teams. Not every child on the list will be drafted to a Majors team. The remaining players are included in the AAA draft and are available to be called up to Majors to fill vacancies that may occur during the season. Once the Majors teams have completed their draft, a list of AAA-eligible players is prepared for the AAA draft. A similar process is used to prepare for the AA draft. Not every child who participates in the skills assessment will be drafted onto a Major, AAA, or AA team. Those not selected in the AA draft will be placed on A teams.

Team Assignment for A, Sluggers, and T-ball Rookies: For Rookies, Sluggers, or A teams, parents may request that their child play on a particular team. If no request is made, players are assigned by home/school area. Every attempt is made for each team to have an equal number of each age group to balance the competitiveness of teams. The Player Agent forms these teams.

Parents may share any concerns in the following appropriate ways:

- Use the comments section on the registration form. These comments are kept confidential. The Player Agent reviews all comments and, when appropriate, shares comments with the relevant Managers.
- If necessary, parents may submit a written request to the Player Agent to exempt their child from playing for one specific Manager or Coach.
- Contact the Player Agent. The Player Agent is each child's advocate within the system and knows what options are available for each child. Mailbox #6 at (855) 325-5582 is for the Player Agent.

Once team assignments are complete, each team's Manager will contact each player's family and provide the practice schedule.

### **Practices and Games**

Practices usually begin in March (shortly after tryouts), depending on the weather and field conditions. Majors teams begin first, followed by AAA, AA, A, and T-ball. (A, Sluggers, and T-Ball Rookies teams typically start their seasons a few weeks after the Majors teams start.) Regular-season games begin in early April and end in early June. Post-season championships and playoff games begin immediately following the regular season. Tournament games (All-Stars) begin in late June (for Minors) and early July (for Majors). Little League policy states that a minimum of 12 games will be played in a season. Majors teams may have 4 meetings (games or practices) per week; AAA, AA, and A may have 3 meetings per week; Sluggers and Rookies may have two meetings per week. At their discretion, Managers may hold optional practices.

Games are played on weekday evenings as well as Saturdays. Games normally are scheduled Monday through Thursday during the week; Fridays are reserved for make-up games that are postponed due to weather or darkness. Games begin at 5:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, and throughout the day on Saturdays.

Each team practices and plays games according to a pre-determined schedule. Times and locations of practices and games will vary. During the regular season, Managers are required to play each player in every game. The minimum amount of playing time for each player varies based on level. Except for the Majors level, each player will play at least half of the game. Managers will do their best to ensure balanced playing time. Minor league players bat in a continuous batting order (all players are included in the batting order, and bat even when they are not playing in the field that inning).

### **Pitch Counts**

FCKLL wants its players to be able to play baseball when they are older, whether in high school, college, recreation leagues, or pickup games. Current philosophies of best practices for coaching youth baseball recommend placing limits on the number of pitches a child may throw. USA Baseball, the American Sports Medicine Institute, Dr. James Andrews and others advocate pitch limits for children participating in baseball. FCKLL has embraced this approach for many years, and has specific guidelines to limit the number of pitches a player may throw in games. In 2008, Little League also instituted a limit to the number of pitches a player may throw in both regular season and tournament games. FCKLL.org contains level-specific guidelines and links with more information.

### **Bill Rose Award**

Each year a Majors player and a AAA player receive the Bill Rose Sportsmanship Award. These players are recognized for displaying the following qualities:

#### Attitude and Effort

- Listens and learns
- Hustles in practices and games
- Plays game with a smile
- Helps coaches with equipment, cleaning up dugouts, and other team chores
- Supports FCKLL through fundraising or other activities

#### Leadership Ability

- Leads by example
- Vocal in support of teammates
- Plays with pride in being a Little Leaguer

#### Dedication and Enthusiasm

- Wins with humility
- Loses with dignity
- Score of game and place in standings do not affect play
- Places game and team ahead of self
- Values team success more than individual accomplishments
- Displays “What can I do to help?” approach to game

#### Maturity and courtesy

- Willingly follows all FCKLL and team rules
- Respects and accepts the decisions made by umpires, coaches, and officials

### **Richard Marsh Award**

Each year, FCKLL selects a player to receive the Richard Marsh Award for exemplary ability and sportsmanship at the AA level.

### **End of Season: Playoffs, Tournaments, and All-Stars**

Playoffs are held at the end of the season for all levels except Sluggers and T-ball Rookies.

The AA-Select Game normally occurs during the Family Fun Picnic and Awards Day. It provides an opportunity for AA teams to showcase some of the top players from the just-completed season.

## **All-Stars**

### **Background**

FCKLL provides an opportunity for selected players — those who best represent the combined attributes of physical ability, baseball knowledge, positive attitude, and dedication to baseball as a team sport — to compete in All-Star tournament play.

### **Selection and Eligibility**

Being part of an All-Star team is an honor and privilege. It requires dedication and hard work from the player, and a large commitment of time from the parent/guardian and child. To be eligible for All-Star tournament play, a player must be available (with only limited exceptions discussed by the Player Agent and affected Manager) for 90 percent of the practices (before and during the tournament) and all but one game. Typically, the 9-10 and 10-11 tournaments begin in late June and run through mid-July. More detailed information is available at FCKLL.org. Families with eligible players should keep these dates in mind when planning summer activities.

17 All-Star players are selected through player voting at the Majors and AAA levels, with the remaining players chosen by a selection committee comprised of Majors and AAA Managers. The 11-12 Majors All-Star Tournament begins around July 4 and runs through late July. 9-10 All Stars and the 10-11 All-Stars are selected through a combination of voting and tryouts.

### **Inclement Weather**

FCKLL enables families to sign up to receive inclement weather updates and field closings via RainedOut. RainedOut instantly broadcasts alerts to subscribers' mobile phones (via SMS text message), e-mail accounts, and to FCKLL.org. Families can sign up at FCKLL.org.

### **FCKLL Information Hotline**

If you have questions or concerns, you may use FCKLL.org or leave a message at (855) 325-5582 and a FCKLL representative will return the message.

### **Insurance**

The League provides free “excess Medical Insurance” for all players, managers, coaches, and umpires. This insurance covers up to \$100,000 in medical costs and begins where a family's personal medical insurance ends with a \$50 deductible. Coverage begins with the first practice and continues through the end of the season, including any playoff and tournament games. If a player becomes injured during a practice or a game, the first step is to alert the team Manager. In addition, the League's Safety Officer must be notified as soon as possible. Insurance claim forms are available from the Safety Officer, who can assist with preparation and filing.

### **Scholar–Athlete Program**

FCKLL promotes excellence in athletic and academic achievement, and emphasizes hard work, sportsmanship, and fair play in baseball. FCKLL insists that playing sports comes after the player has completed his/her homework or study requirements. It is FCKLL's goal to encourage young players to become better athletes and better students, realizing that success on the athletic field only comes with success in the classroom. Every player who maintains a “B” average or the equivalent will be eligible to receive this award at the end of the season.

## **Sponsorship**

Sponsors play a vital role in the financial stability of FCKLL. Their generosity helps purchase uniforms and equipment, and enables FCKLL to have the most reasonable registration and training fees in the area. FCKLL encourages all FCKLL families to patronize its sponsors.

## **Uniforms and Equipment**

FCKLL provides uniforms for all players. Players receive pants, a jersey, a hat, and socks. FCKLL also sells practice pants and extra uniforms.

**Gloves:** Players must provide their own fielding glove. The glove should be of an appropriate size to fit the player's hand, and large enough so that a baseball will fit in the pocket. Typically, smaller gloves are easier for the players to use. FCKLL provides catcher's gloves and gear to each team at the start of the season.

**Shoes/Cleats:** Shoes should provide good traction on hard ground. Tennis shoes are acceptable. Cleats can provide better traction. Only rubber cleats are allowed in Little League. No metal spikes or metal cleats are allowed.

**Bats:** FCKLL provides each team with several bats, which are specifically selected to meet the developmental requirements of the players. Parents who choose to purchase a bat for their child often find that their players hit better with shorter and lighter bats. Bats are measured by length in inches and weight in ounces. Manufacturers typically will highlight the differential of the length of a bat and its weight. The greater the differential, the lighter and more manageable the bat will be. For instance, a bat appropriate for a T-ball player may be 25" long. If the bat weighs 16 ounces, it will have a -9 differential. If the bat weighs 15 ounces, it will have a -10 differential, which is better for most players. For the latest on allowable bat size, composite bats, and other bat requirements and restrictions, please go to [littleleague.org](http://littleleague.org).

## **Prohibition on Use of Tobacco Products**

To provide a healthy and wholesome environment for the children who participate in FCKLL, the use of any form of tobacco is prohibited within 50 feet of all playing and practice fields. FCKLL asks for all adults' help in this regard to keep the children healthy.

## **Budget**

Copies of FCKLL's annual budget are available upon request from FCKLL's Treasurer.

## **Suggestions, Concerns, Complaints**

FCKLL always seeks to improve the service that it offers to the community, and wants to receive feedback. FCKLL distributes a yearly survey to obtain views from the general membership. Persons who have more pressing concerns are encouraged to share any suggestions, concerns, or complaints in an appropriate and constructive manner. Managers, coaches, and Board members are good points of contact to receive this feedback.

## **Umpires**

FCKLL relies on adult and student (generally age 12 and older) umpires, and provides training for novice and experienced umpires. Interested volunteers should contact the Chief Umpire.



## **Scheduled Events**

### **Opening Day**

Prior to the first game, FCKLL has an Opening Day Ceremony. Players gather with their teams and march to Westgate Field #1. Parents and friends are strongly encouraged to attend. Local dignitaries attend the ceremony and are an important part of the activities. The ceremony is one of the few times that all players are together at one time.

### **Hit-a-Thon**

The annual Hit-a-Thon fundraiser is essential for FCKLL's operations. It provides over 40 percent of FCKLL's operating income. This activity enables FCKLL to offer an enjoyable playing experience for community youth, and provides funds for improvement projects.

### **Falls Church Memorial Day Parade**

Each year on Memorial Day, FCKLL participates in the City of Falls Church's parade. Every player is invited to participate. The parade provides an opportunity for publicity with the public, including a way to display FCKLL sponsors and thank them for their support.

### **Family Fun Fair and Awards Picnic**

The Family Fun Fair and Awards Picnic occur at the end of the spring season. At this event, FCKLL presents trophies, Hit-A-Thon prizes, and awards to players. Teams hold picnics on the Westgate grounds. Fans have the opportunity to watch the AA-Select game, and all players can participate in fair-type games (such as throwing baseballs to dunk their coaches in the dunk tank).

### **Fall Ball**

Registration for FCKLL's Fall Ball instructional league begins mid-season. During the fall season, FCKLL teams compete against teams from Arlington, Vienna, Great Falls, McLean, and Reston. Typically, a Fall Ball player registers for the next level up from the level he/she played in the previous spring, thereby using Fall Ball as an opportunity to prepare for the upcoming spring season. Players gain valuable experience and continue to improve their skills.

### **Beyond FCKLL**

For players who want to increase their baseball knowledge and training, there is life after FCKLL. Matriculating 12-year-olds can play what is commonly referred to as Babe Ruth "Transition" baseball during the Fall Ball season, or opt to play for any of the private travel baseball teams in the area. At this level, players are introduced to the 90' field and to professional baseball rules, both of which are necessary for youth who desire to play baseball at the high school or college level.

Falls Church's local "Transition" baseball is run by the **Falls Church-Annandale (FCA) Babe Ruth League**. While there are tryouts for FCA Babe Ruth League, all registered players will be placed on a team. More information can be found at <http://fallschurchannandale.baberuthonline.com>.

Private travel baseball teams require that players attend tryouts, which typically are held during the summer. Not all players who try out will make a team. Once a player is on a travel team, he or she typically will stay with that team beyond that fall season into the following spring and beyond. The **Northern Virginia Travel Baseball League** organizes and holds games. A listing of travel teams in the Falls Church area and additional information can be found at <http://www.fairfaxbaseball.org>.

(Note: Parts of this handbook were adapted from Rainer Martens' A Parent's Guide to Little League Baseball).